PEACE/WILLISTON
FISH & WILDLIFE
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South Peace Arm Stone's Sheep Inventory, June 1992

M. D. Wood
July 1992

PWFWCP Report No. 14

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The Peace/Williston Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program is a cooperative venture of BC Hydro and the provincial fish and wildlife management agencies, supported by funding from BC Hydro. The Program was established to enhance and protect fish and wildlife resources affected by the construction of the W.A.C. Bennett and Peace Canyon dams on the Peace River, and the subsequent creation of the Williston and Dinosaur Reservoirs.

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Website: *www.bchydro.bc.ca/environment/initiatives/pwcp/*

This report has been approved by the Peace/Williston Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program Fish Technical Committee.

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SOUTH PEACE ARM STONE'S SHEEP INVENTORY

JUNE 16, 1992

INTRODUCTION:

An inventory of Stone's sheep on the South side of the Peace Arm was conducted on June 16, 1992 to monitor the success of the 1990 and 1991 transplants to this area. Mt. McAllister, Mt. Frank Roy, Mt. Monteith and Mt. Bickford were surveyed using a Bell 206 helicopter chartered by Northern Mountain Helicopters from Fort St. John, with pilot Bob Batchelor.

SURVEY CONDITIONS:

The survey commenced at 7:36 am at Mt. McAllister and was completed by 11:57 am. The weather was mainly clear although rainshowers and fog encountered in the mountains made a complete survey of the area impossible. Temperatures ranged from +6 to +12 degrees C.

METHODS:

The inventory method involved contour flying around the above named mountain blocks using a helicopter and three-person crew. The two rear seat observers (Mari Wood, Wildlife Biologist, Williston Program, and Fraser Corbould, Wildlife Biologist, Williston Program) searched for, counted and classified animals. The navigator (Rob Woods, Wildlife Habitat Technician, Fort St. John) also searched for and classified animals, and recorded the locations of animals seen on 1:250,000 topographic maps. Animals were classified as adult male, adult female, yearling and lambs/calves.

RESULTS:

A total of 14 Stone's sheep, 17 caribou, 4 moose, 2 grizzly bears and 9 black bears were sighted. Group size, classifications and map locations are recorded on the following tables and maps (Appendices I and II).

DISCUSSION:

All Stone's sheep were observed in high elevation alpine areas or on timbered bluffs, around 5000'. The poor lamb/ewe ratio (0 lambs seen) may indicate problems with the success of the transplant. Five explanations exist: 1) lambs may not have been born yet, 2) lambs may still have been hidden by the ewes and therefore not observed on this survey, 3) sheep and lambs may have been present in the upper alpine areas where poor weather conditions prevented surveying, 4) lambs may have been heavily predated upon, and/or 5) some sort of reproductive failure occurred this year. Yearlings were observed during the survey indicating that reproduction was successful last year. It is possible that this year, the few rams in the area (only two were seen during the survey), were not able to service all the females throughout their range.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. An additional Stone's sheep inventory should be conducted this summer during better weather conditions, to determine if lambs were missed during the first survey.

2. A mid-winter survey should be conducted to determine winter habitat selection and densities of sheep on specific mountain ranges.

3. A transplant of additional Stone's sheep should be undertaken in February to supplement the existing population if the lamb/ewe ratio found on the second summer inventory is low. Rams should be tranplanted to Mt. Frank Roy and Mt. Monteith, the key areas of sheep concentration.

APPENDIX I: STONE'S SHEEP

STONE'S SHEEP

GROUP #		MALE	FEMALE	YRLG	LAMB	TOTAL
5		2	6	0	0	8
6		0	1	0	0	1
10		0	1	1	0	2
11		0	1	2	0	3

NOTES:

Group 5: One adult male radio-collared 148.464
Two adult females ear tagged

Group 6: One adult female radio-collared 149.593
with red ear tag

Group 11: One adult female radio-collared 148.905

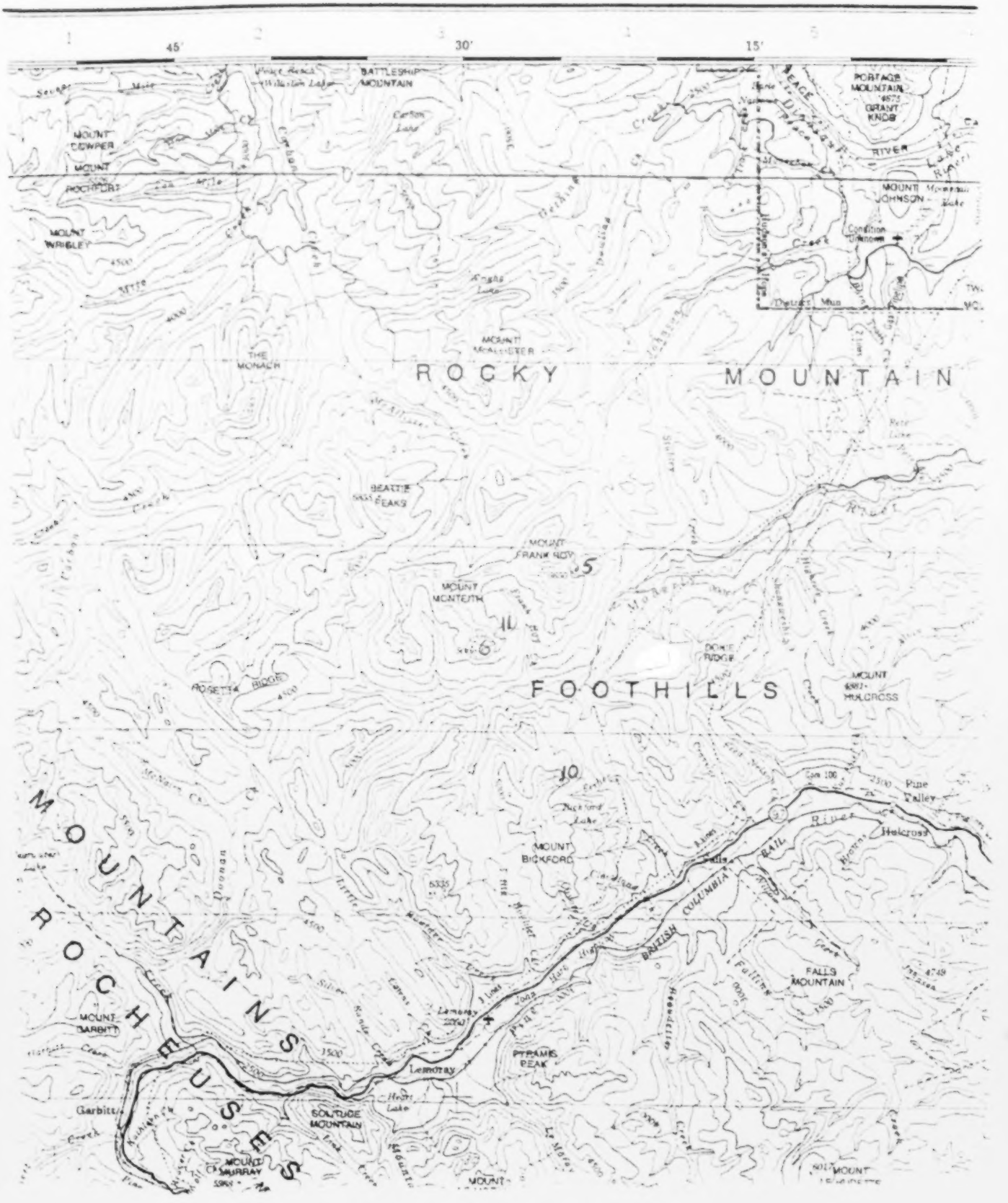
APPENDIX II: OTHER WILDLIFE

OTHER WILDIFE OBSERVED

GROUP #/ SPECIES	ADULT MALE	ADULT FEMALE	UNCLAS ADULT	YRLG	YOUNG	TOTAL
1 - Caribou		1				1
2 - Caribou		1			1	2
3 - Caribou			7		5	12
4 - Moose		1			1	2
7 - Bl Bear		1			1	2
8 - Caribou			2			2
9 - Grizzly		1		1		2
12 - Bl Bear		1			2	3
13 - Moose		1			1	2
14 - Bl Bear		1		2		3
15 - Bl Bear			1			1

STONE'S SHEEP

ÉDITION 2



MOOSE, CARIBOU, BLACK BEAR, GRIZZLY BEAR

ÉDITION 2